

Guide to the Allen Family Papers I, 1848-1906

Title: Allen Family Papers I, 1848-1906

Creator: Allen Family

Extent: 1.9 linear feet

Collection Number: MS0064

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ABSTRACT

Business and personal papers of John G. Allen (1810- 1891) and his son Charles Edward (1860-1943), planters of Marengo County, Alabama. Includes Civil War material.

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

In 1841, the Allen family removed to Old Spring Hill, Marengo County, Alabama, from Wadesboro, Anson County, North Carolina. The founder of the family in Alabama was John Gray Allen who was born June 10, 1810, in North Carolina and died September 7, 1891, in Alabama. He was the son of Richard Allen, Jr., and Mary Gray, the daughter of John Gray. The other children of Richard and Mary Gray were George W. Allen, Richard Proctor Allen, Thetis Allen, and Sarah Allen.

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John Gray Allen married three times. His first wife Anne Allen (unrelated) died in 1835 before he came to Alabama. By this marriage he had three children: William Caldwell Allen, Mary Jane Allen (1838-1909), and Richard Proctor Allen (1841-1909).

On August 4, 1842, John Gray Allen married Nancy Roe Kennon Curtis (March 9, 1816-October 5, 1849), the widow of Hiram Boatright and the daughter of Samuel Curtis. Four children were born of this marriage: Elizabeth Gray Allen, John Curtis Allen (1848-1914), Leroy Jones Allen (1847-?), and Thomas Roe Allen (1848-1865).

Ann Curtis (June 13, 1817-November 17, 1897), whom John Gray Allen married in 1858, was the daughter of William Curtis, the granddaughter of Samuel Curtis, and the niece of Nancy Roe Kennon Curtis--the second wife of John Gray Allen. They had one son, Charles Edward Allen (August 30, 1860-May 23, 1943).

In 1857, John Gray Allen built a handsome two-story house in Old Spring Hill, which is still occupied by his descendants (1978). He was an extensive cotton planter as well as a merchant, and he frequently financed other planters by accepting mortgages on their property and crops.

John Gray Allen was a trustee of the Old Spring Hill Academy and served as a Justice of the Peace in 1850. Although he was too old to fight for the Confederacy, he furnished supplies and materials to support the Southern Cause. Due to his activities during the Civil War, his citizenship was taken away but reinstated in 1868 by Andrew Johnson's Presidential Pardon.

William Caldwell Allen, the oldest son of John Gray Allen by his first marriage, was born August 28, 1836, in North Carolina and died April 22, 1881, in Alabama. He married Julia Anne Finch (October 15, 1845-December 13, 1909) on April 11, 1866, and had one son Weldon Gray Allen.

At the beginning of the Civil War, William Caldwell Allen joined the Jefferson Davis Company of Cavalry which was engaged in many conflicts in Virginia and Tennessee. Although seriously wounded during the war, he recovered and returned to Marengo County where he farmed and led an active part in county affairs.

Charles Edward Allen, the only child of John Gray Allen by this third wife Anne Curtis, was born August 30, 1860, and died May 23, 1943. He attended the Spring Hill Academy and remained a life-long resident of Old Spring Hill where he was a successful farmer. He was active in county affairs and was a member of the Marengo County Board of Education. He was also a member of the Knights of Pythias.

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The Allen Family Papers span the period 1848 through 1906. The papers fall into two major divisions: those relating to the affairs of John Gray Allen (1810-1891) and those relating to the affairs of Charles Edward Allen (1860-1943). The papers are fairly well distributed between business and personal matters of these two men.

The collection consists of various types of materials, such as Civil War letters, tenant farmer contracts, mortgages and indentures, bills and receipts, personal letters, insurance policies, and miscellaneous items relating to the family. All the papers are originals.

The Allen Family Papers reveal that John Gray Allen was an extensive cotton planter and successful entrepreneur who frequently financed other planters by accepting mortgages on their lands and crops.

The papers of Charles Edward Allen deal with farming matters of the 1880s to early 1900s. The papers also indicate that Charles E. Allen continued his father's practice of financing other planters.

CONTAINER LIST

I. John Gray Allen (June 10, 1810 - September 7, 1891)

A. Business

1. Tenant Farmer Contracts (1873-1874) 4 Items Folder 1

Agreements between landowner, John G. Allen, and tenant farmers establishing responsibilities of each. Chronologically arranged.

2. Commission Merchants Correspondence (1852-1872)

a. Edward Kenworthy Carlisle; Carlisle & Smith Co. of Mobile Alabama (1852-1860) 15 items Folder 2

Letters from Carlisle concerning the market value of cotton and subsequent sales. Chronologically arranged.

b. Rodgers and Pope of Mobile, Alabama (1856-1860) 8 Items Folder 3

Letters from Rodgers and Pope concerning the market value of cotton and subsequent sales. Also letters concerning household and farm supplies. Chronologically arranged.

c. Rush Tuller of Mobile, Alabama (1860-1872) 33 Items Folder 4

Letters concerning the market value of cotton and subsequent sales. Also letters concerning household and farm supplies. Including papers relating to Tuller serving as a collection agent for John G. Allen. Chronologically arranged.

- d. Charles Hopkins and Co. of Mobile, Alabama (1873-1874) 16 Items Folder 5

Letters from Hopkins concerning the market value of cotton and subsequent sales. Chronologically arranged.

3. Mortgages, Indentures, Crop Liens (1848-1886) 42 Items Folder 6

Loans secured by mortgages on crops, farms, houses, livestock, and slaves. Chronologically arranged.

Folder 6-A: (1848-1877) 23 Items

Folder 6-B: (1879-1886) 19 Items

4. Real Estate and Personal Property Taxes (1866-1877, 1886) 22 Items Folder 7

Federal, state, and county taxes levied on real estate and personal property owned by John G. Allen and wife Ann Curtis Allen. Chronologically arranged.

5. Legal Papers (1847-1894) 28 Items Folder 8

Promissory notes, court judgements, land title opinions, summons for jury duty, estate administration and settlement papers. Chronologically arranged.

6. Incoming Legal Correspondence (1877-1885) 10 Items Folder 9

Letters from attorneys relating to various legal matters. Chronologically arranged.

7. Insurance Policies (1865-1888) 23 Items Folder 10

Fire insurance policies on buildings, home, and cotton. Life insurance policies on John G. Allen and wife Ann Curtis Allen. Chronologically arranged.

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8. Farm Operations (1861-1885) 33 Items [Folder 11](#)

Reports from overseer, letters concerning the purchase of lumber and fence posts, letters concerning farm machinery (i.e. Dixie Press patent and operation, thrasher, gleaner, reaper), black - smith tools, well repair, purchase of sheep, cattle, and grain. Chronologically arranged.

9. Cotton Sales (1854-1877) 16 items [Folder 12](#)

Letters from several commission merchants in Mobile, Selma, and Demopolis. Chronologically arranged.

10. Creditor Papers (1859-1889) 32 items [Folder 13](#)

Letters requesting loans, extension of notes, and letters relating to debts. Chronologically arranged.

11. Askew Brothers (1877-1887) 12 items [Folder 14](#)

General merchants; letters from Askews concerning notes held by John G. Allen. Chronologically arranged.

12. Miscellaneous Papers (1871-1885) 10 items [Folder 15](#)

Purchase of railroad bonds, leasing of farm property, Southern Express Money order, offers to purchase property, printed prospectus for bank stock. Chronologically arranged.

B. Personal

1. Civil War Letters (1862-1863) 6 items [Folder 16](#)

Letters to John G. Allen from his son, William Caldwell Allen, while a soldier in the Confederate Cavalry. Chronologically arranged.

2. Confederate States of American Item (1863-1865) 10 Items [Folder 17](#)

Confederate States bond receipts and impressment receipts. Chronologically arranged.

3. Post-Civil War Items (1865, 1866, 1868) 10 Items [Folder 18](#)

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U. S. Oaths of Allegiance, Application for removal of disabilities, U. S. Presidential Pardon, receipt for preparation of pardon application. Chronologically arranged.

4. Family Letters (1859-1888) 23 Items Folder 19

Letters to John G. Allen from his son, William C. Allen; nephew, B. O. Watkins; brother, G. W. Allen; nephew, W.A. Lee; brother, R. P. Allen; daughter, Julia Finch Allen; niece, Lou Watkins, niece, Laura Gray Allen; nephew, W. L. Agee; niece, M. Quinney; daughter, Hattie Allen; and Silas Allen. Also letter from Elizabeth Gray Allen to cousin Jane Allen. Chronologically arranged.

5. Miscellaneous Letters (1852-1886) 25 Items Folder 20

Letters concerning the administration of the academy at Old Spring Hill, letters concerning employment of overseers; note concerning the Old Spring Hill Grange; letters offering to purchase land from John G. Allen; letters concerning line disputes; and letters from various acquaintances. Chronologically arranged.

II. Charles Edward Allen (August 30, 1860 - May 23, 1943)

A. Business

1. Convict Labor Contracts (1885-1903) 23 Items Folder 21

Contracts between State of Alabama and Charles E. Allen for the purpose of hiring convicts as farm laborers. Chronologically arranged.

2. Tenant Farmer Contracts (1895-1902) 7 Items Folder 22

Legal contracts between Charles E. Allan and tenant farmers. Chronologically arranged.

3. Mortgages, Indentures, Crop Liens (1889-1901) 12 Items Folder 23

Mortgages on Farms to enable farmers to plant crops. Chronologically arranged.

4. Financial Papers Folder 24

Cancelled checks and bank statements from First National Bank of Demopolis, Alabama, and accounts of cotton sales handles by First National Bank for Charles E. Allen. Items are unarranged.

B. Personal

1. Miscellaneous Papers (1870-1905) 35 Items Folder 25

School performance evaluations, letters to Charles E. Allen, property tax forms, Knights of Pythias (notices of meetings, dues, and receipts of dues), appointment as trustee to Marengo Board of Education. Chronologically arranged.

III. Envelopes (ca. 1848-1905) 297 Items Folders 26/A & 26/B

Envelopes removed from correspondence in Allen Family Papers. Some still retain stamps. Several are highly decorated with advertisements. Items are unarranged.

IV. Miscellaneous Papers (1854, 1862-1865, 1866, 1876) 9 Items Folder 27

Undated land maps, soap receipts, tax forms, and letters unrelated to the Allen Family. Chronologically arranged.

V. Bills and Receipts (1848-1906) Folders 28.1 through 28.20

Chronologically arranged by folder, unarranged within folder.

Folder	28.1 (1848-1859)	17 Items
"	28.2 (1860-1867)	102 Items
"	28.3 (1868-1869)	41 Items
"	28.4 (1870-1872)	93 Items
"	28.5 (1873-1874)	133 Items
"	28.6 (1875-1877)	95 Items
"	28.7 (1878-1879)	78 Items
"	28.8 (1880-1882)	86 Items
"	28.9 (1883-1885)	59 Items
"	28.10 (1886-1889)	100 Items
"	28.11 (1890-1894)	53 Items
"	28.12 (1895)	127 Items
"	28.13 (1896)	78 Items

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"	28.14 (1897-1898)	84 Items
"	28.15 (1899)	48 Items
"	28.16 (1900-1901)	101 Items
"	28.17 (1902)	61 Items
"	28.18 (1903)	78 Items
"	28.19 (1904)	43 Items
"	28.20 (1905-1906)	93 Items

VI. Prout and Robertson Bankers (ca. 1885-1906) 267 Items Folder 29

Cancelled checks, bank statements, and bank books. Unarranged.